



From the Office of Indiana Attorney General
Steve Carter

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Attorney General Carter Cautions Used Car Buyers to Beware Flood Damaged Vehicles from Gulf Region

Indianapolis – Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter is urging those consumers in the market to buy a used car to be cautious of flood damaged vehicles from the Gulf region that may have made their way on to Indiana lots.

“Thousands of cars were flooded in the gulf region and over the next several months some unscrupulous people may try to refurbish and sell these vehicles without disclosing the damage that has been done,” Attorney General Steve Carter said. “There are some common signs of a flood-damaged car, but not all damage is readily apparent. Buyers need to allow their mechanic to inspect a car before they purchase it – particularly be concerned if the cars history shows it has been titled in a gulf region state that has been affected by flooding.”

Consumers in the market to buy a used car in the coming months should follow some guidelines:

- Have a mechanic inspect the car, especially in areas that you can't reach or see, and in areas that you don't have expertise, such as the electrical system.
- Be cautious if the car has a musty or mildew odor.
- Look for water marks on the carpet.
- Run the vehicle identification number (VIN) through a service that provides the history of a car for a small fee. This report can provide a more extensive history of the car than a seller may have. These services may reveal prior odometer or salvage/rebuild issues, and the states that have titled the car in the past.

Indiana law requires dealers who sell more than 5 vehicles a year to make written disclosures of salvage titled vehicles prior to selling the car.

“Being proactive and having an inspection done by a trusted mechanic before buying a car is one of the best protections against purchasing something that may not be what it seems,” Carter added.

Individuals who believe they have purchased a flood damaged vehicle without being notified may file a complaint with attorney general's office at www.in.gov/attorneygeneral or 1-800-382-5516. If one does not seek recovery through the attorney general's office, but rather by filing a private lawsuit, victims could be eligible for damages up to three times actual damages or \$2,500, whichever is greater, and attorney fees and costs.

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